

436 mala the people travel miles to exchange their produce; and
 443 so important is the market as a social function that a merchant
 will not dispose of his produce except at that place, even
 though offered payment far in excess of its market value."

- 437 Barter was the only means of exchange, and value was
 436 established by desirability and rarity. Money, an exchange
 medium of fixed value, did not exist. However, something
 had to be found which would balance an inequality of ex-
 change by being not too valuable to use in adjusting small
 transactions and at the same time universally wanted. The
 cacao bean answered this requirement and was easily portable
 as well. The Aztecs were extremely fond of chocolate (the
 word itself is of Aztec derivation), so that beans were gladly
 converted into the national luxury drink. Quills of gold dust
 sometimes were used as an exchange medium, as were cres-
 cent-shaped knives of thin-beaten copper. These last had not
 the common acceptance or the utility of cacao beans, al-
 though they represented easily portable value."

317 The most precious substance among the Aztecs was jade,
 435 or stones resembling it in texture and color. Both jadeite
 and nephrite occur in the New World, and the American
 variety is distinguishable from the Asiatic stone. Uncut
 stones are seldom seen today, for there is no lapidaries'
 market in modern Middle America or the United States,
 whereas jade is still extensively worked in China, so that men
 find it worth their while to search rivers in Burma for
 boulders of this rare substance. (See Plate 3.)

435 The testimony of the Conquistador Bernal Diaz is con-
 clusive on this point of value. During the night when Cortes
 retreated from Mexico the leader, after taking off his share
 of treasure, turned the surplus over to his troops. Many,

life:⁷³ hence little was left to him beyond his legitimate wants.⁴⁶³ We see thus, that hardly any chance was given for the formation of a class which, resting upon the kind of occupation, might assume the position of "caste" in the organization of aboriginal Mexican society.

It is repeatedly asserted, and on high authority, that the merchants or traders of Mexico enjoyed particular privileges. We must premise here that merchants, in the sense of venders of other people's manufactures or products (thus living off of the difference between cost and proceeds) were known only in one way.⁷⁴ The name for merchant was "man who exchanges one

⁷³ That the artisans or mechanics contributed a portion of their wares in the shape of tribute, is amply proven. See for instance, *Oviedo* (Lib. XXXIII, cap. LI, p. 530. Easily misunderstood!) This passage of Oviedo explains the action of "wrathful chief" towards the "jewellers" and "goldsmiths" at the arrival of Cortés, as related by Tezozomoc, Durán, and by Sahagún. See also: *Zurita* ("Rapport, etc.," p. 223). *Bustamante* ("Tucoco, etc.," Parte III, cap. V, p. 232). *Herrera* (Dec. III, lib. IV, cap. XVII, p. 135). *Clavigero* (Lib. VII, cap. XV, p. 480). *Bancroft* (Vol. III, cap. VI, pp. 231 and 232). [65]

⁷⁴ The existence of currency, or of money, in the shape of grains of cacao, T shapen pieces of tin or copper, and quills filled with gold dust is generally admitted. See for instance, *Prescott* ("Conquest of Mexico," Book IV, cap. II, p. 140). *H. H. Bancroft* (Vol. II, cap. XII, pp. 381, 382, and 383). Cacao played, among the ancient Mexicans, the same role as "wampum" did among the northern Indians; for purposes of exchange, but did not go beyond it. In regard to the so-called copper or tin coins, or rather marks or checks, it is well to examine the matter more closely. *Cortés* ("Carta Quarta" in *Vedia I*, p. 111), says very positively that at Tachco, he obtained sundry small pieces of tin like very thin money ("a manera de moneda muy delgada"), which he indeed found to have been used as currency by the natives. ("halló que en dicha provincia, aun en otras, se trataba por moneda"). *Bernal Díaz* (Cap. XCII, p. 80, *Vedia II*) mentions axes of "brass, copper, and tin" ("hachas de latón y cobre y estaño"), bartered at the market place of Tlatelulco, "and before we left this square ("plaza") we met with other traders, who from what they said, sold gold in grains as they obtained it from the mines, and enclosed in quills of the geese of the land, and so thin ("asi blancos" so white) that the gold might be seen, and by the length and size of the quills they determined how many mantles or "jiquipiles" (bags of 8000 grains) of cacao they were worth, or slaves, or any other things for which they bartered it." ("ó otra qualquier cosa á que lo trocaban"). *Gomara* ("Conquista, etc.," pp. 348 and 349). "But the chief one is cacahuatl, which serves as coin. . . ." "Their buying and selling consists in exchanging one thing for another. . . ." (*Id.*, p. 451). "No tenían moneda, teniendo mucha plata, oro y cobre, y sabiéndolo hundir y labrar, y contratando mucho en ferias y mercados. Su moneda usual y corriente es cacahuatl ó cacao." *Oviedo* (Lib. VIII, cap. XXX, pp. 316, 317. Lib. XXXIII, cap. LI, p. 530) mentions only cacao as currency. *Turquemada* (Lib. XIV, cap. XIV, p. 260). "It was customary at these marts ('en estos mercados') to exchange ('trocar') one thing for another, and even nowadays this is sometimes practised; but everywhere cacao is most commonly used. In other parts they used, besides, some small mantles which they call Patol-quachtil. . . . Elsewhere they used plentifully some copper coins, almost like unto ("de hechura") a Tau T, two or three fingers wide and made of thin plates ("planchuela") some thicker, other less thick. . . . Where there was much gold ("donde avia mucho Oro"), small quills filled with it, circulated among the Indians," ("traían unos Cantillos de ello, y andaba entre los Indios mucho de esto"). *Alonso Zuazo* ("Carta 436
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44/ thing for another" ("tlahamacani"),⁷⁵ and such was every artisan, since, in the market place of aboriginal Mexico, every artisan bartered his own manufactures for whatever he needed for sub-

436 al Padre Fray Luis de Figueroa." Santiago de Cuba, 14 Nov., 1821. Col. de Doc. Vol. I, p. 361). "Hay una moneda entre ellos con que venden y compran, que se llama cacahuato, . . ." Anonymous Conqueror (p. 280, etc.) mentions Cacao, "e é moneta la piu comune, ma molto incomoda dopo l'oro é l'argento . . ." Acosta (Lib. IV, cap. 3, p. 196) "No se halla. que los Indios usassen oro, ni plata, ni metal para moneda, ni para precio de la cosas, usandolo para ornato, como esta dicho." The statement of Torquemada is plain. While it explains the gradual ascent and development of the notion that the Mexicans had an equivalent to money, it clearly proves that only barter and exchange, and no actual buying, took place. The copper-plates which, as Mr. Bancroft justly remarks, "constituted perhaps the nearest approach to coined money," still were not intended even for such a purpose, since they were of varying size and thickness. But the story of the copper or golden "Eagles" given to the Mexican traders as money wherewith to buy, as faithfully reported and gravely discussed by Mr. Bancroft also, deserves some special ventilation. This story is taken from Sahagun (Lib. IX, cap. II, p. 342) "y dábales 1600 toldillos, que ellos llaman quauhtli para rescatar." These toldillos they divided into two parts of 800 each. Now Sahagun's editor, Sr. C. M. de Bustamante, very confidently asserts in note a, (p. 342): "Era una moneda que consistia en unos pedazos de cobre cortados en figura de T.—Clarigero, tom. I, pág. 349." The reference to Clarigero is for Lib. VII, cap. XXXVI. Now "Toldillo" is derived from "toldár" that is, to shroud or cover, and means merely a cover, and not a piece of metal. Used also for a covered litter or portable chair. Besides, "quauhtli" indeed signifies Eagle, but it is an evident misprint and should read "quachtli," which signifies a mantle or sheet, thus perfectly agreeing both with the "toldillo" and with the "patolquachtli" of Torquemada. The "golden eagles" of Mr. Brasseur are therefore rendered utterly useless.

291 Anyone reading *Texosomoc* will see at a glance what a conspicuous part these mantles "Quachtli," (*Molina*, II, p. 84) played in intercourse and barter. According to *Ramirez de Fuenleal* (Letter, etc., Col. de Doc's conc. le, México, I, p. 251) they formed to a certain extent the basis of tribute. These cotton-sheets are well described by *Peter Martyr* ("De novo Orbe," Dec. V., cap. X, p. 230): "Concerning the shape and fashion of their garments; it is ridiculous to behold: they call it a garments, because they cover themselves therewith, but it hath no resemblance with any other garment, of any fashion: it is only a square covering like unto that, which your holiness cast on your shoulders, sometimes in my presence, when you are about to kimbé your heade, to preserve your garments, loast haire, or any other filth shoudl fal upon them. That covering they cast about their necke, and then knitting two of the four corners under their throate, they lette the covering hang downe, which scarce couereth the bodie as lowe as the legges. Having seen these garments I ceased to wonder, that so great a number of garments was sent to Cortes, as we mentioned before: for they are all of small mcment, and many of them take uppe but little roome."

441 With the absence of money the profession of merchant as one who lives from the
439 profits of his sales, becomes limited almost to what he can gather from out-side of his
437 own community, in other words, to what he can import. Their main and almost exclusive business consisted in effecting intercourse between the tribes. At home, every artisan sold or rather exchanged his own wares in the public markets. See *Cortés* ("Carta Segunda," Vedia I, pp. 32 and 33), *Bernal Diaz* ("Hist. verdad," etc., Vedia II, p. 86, cap. XCII), *Gomara* ("Conquista," p. 348, Vedia I), "Cada oficio y cada mercaderia tiene su lugar señalado . . .", *Sahagun* (Lib. X, cap. XVI, p. 41), "El que vende piedras preciosas, é lapidarios es de esta propiedad, que sabe labrar sutilmente las piedras preciosas y pulirlas. . . ." He mentions as manufacturers of their own goods the following: "plateros de oro" (41), "Tratantes en mantas" (Cap. XVII, 42), "que venden mantas," "que venden cotaras" (Cap. XX, pp. 48, 49 and 51), "olleros," "que

assistance. Another name for the same profession was "man 441 who takes more than he gives" "tiamicqui,"⁷⁶ a surname or slur. Lastly they were called "puchtecatl."⁷⁷ It is with this title that traders appear, among the ancient Mexicans, as privileged people. But such they became always only under peculiar circumstances. At certain intervals of time a number of men 439 gathered, forming a company for the purpose of visiting the 441 market places of other tribes and exchanging their home products 648 for those of distant regions. Such an enterprise was always a great venture, and required a peculiar organization. The participants were to be numerous enough to resist the assaults of straggling bands, but they should not appear so numerous as to arouse suspicion. They should be well armed, but at the same time anxious to avoid collision. They needed a certain number of carriers, not only for the wares which they took along, but for their supplies, still the number of these carriers could not be too great. Such an expedition was in reality not a private, but a tribal undertaking. Its members not only carried into distant countries the industry of their tribe, but they also had to observe the customs, manners, and resources of the people whom they visited. Clothed with diplomatic attributes, they often were less traders than spies. Thus they cautiously felt their way from tribe to tribe, from Indian fair to Indian fair, exchanging their stuff for articles not produced at home, all the while carefully noting what might be important to their own tribe. It was a highly dangerous mission. Frequently they never returned, being waylaid, or treacherously butchered even while enjoying the hospitality of a pueblo in which they had been bartering.

The safe return however of such a party to the pueblo of 441 Mexico was always an important and joyful event. The recep- 527 tion was sometimes, in solemnity of exercises and in barbarous

venden comales," "que venden cestos," "que vende petacas" (Cap. XXIII, p. 56, etc.), 441 "oficial de navajas," "Lo que hacen esteras" (Cap. XXIV, p. 69). In general, nearly all the aboriginal manufacturers are mentioned by him also as selling the products of their industry, and vice versa. H. H. Bancroft (Vol. II, pp. 265 and 264, cap. XII). 439

⁷⁶ Molina ("Vocabulario" Parte Ia, p. 84). "Tlanamacac," "tendero," "á vendedor de algo," Parte IIa, p. 127; "nite-tlanamicitla," "dar o trocar una cosa por otra, o recom- 437 pensar" (p. 127, II). Exchange and sale appear almost synonymous.

⁷⁷ Molina (Parte Ia, p. 84). From "nite-tiamicaquitla," "mostrar" (II, p. 112).

⁷⁸ Molina (I, 64), also (II, 23, 84). Sahagun (Lib. IX, cap. III, p. 348, cap. V, pp. 254, 255, cap. I, p. 372, etc.), calls them also; "nacaloxtomeca," literally "peddlars of the Nahuatl." Molina (II, p. 78). The derivation of both words I am unable to give.